

General Plan Program Citizens' Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting #12 – April 12, 2004

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for the General Plan program held its twelfth meeting on Monday April 12, 2004 at 6:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Ceremonial Room on the 7th floor of Riverside City Hall. Attendees were as follows:

CAC Members

Chair David Leonard
Vice Chair Tom Pevehouse
Brigadier General Stan Brown
Kimberly Davidson-Morgan
Mike Fine
George Flower
Barry Johnson
Morgan Keith
Maynard Lowry
Colleen McBride
David McNiel
Bill Warkentin
Matt Webb

Other interested parties in attendance

Dan Hays
Bill Wilkman

City Staff

Ken Gutierrez, Planning Director
Tom Boyd, City Engineer
Fran Dunajski, Traffic Engineer
Craig Aaron, Principal Planner
Diane Jenkins, Senior Planner
Patricia Brenes, Associate Planner

Consultant Team

John Cook, Cotton/Bridges/Associates
Gary Hamrick, Meyer, Mohaddes Associates
Janet Harvey, Meyer, Mohaddes Associates

Introductory Remarks

John Cook briefly discussed each of the items on the evening's agenda. He stated that one key goal for tonight's meeting was for the CAC to make a recommendation on a preferred circulation alternative.

Review and Approval of Minutes, March 1, 2004

Chair Leonard solicited comments on the minutes. Hearing none, approval of the minutes was moved, seconded, and approved by acclamation.

Update on General Plan Process

Cook stated that staff was in the process of reviewing all of the General Plan elements, except for Circulation, which was incomplete pending resolution of the preferred circulation alternative. In response to a question from General Brown, Cook stated that both staff and consultants will aim to deliver drafts of the elements to CAC members well in advance of the CAC's May 17 review meeting.

Main Discussion

Cook turned over the floor to Gary Hamrick, who delivered a presentation recapping decisions already made on the preferred circulation alternative, as well as an analysis of connections of the west end of Overlook Parkway to the 91 Freeway.

(Hamrick's presentation is available on the General Plan website: www.riversideca.gov ; click on the General Plan 2025 icon).

Hamrick stated that at previous CAC meetings, the CAC had agreed to include the following components within the updated Circulation Element:

- Completion of the currently adopted General Plan element, including:
 - Planned expansion of Alessandro to 6 lanes
 - Planned completion of Overlook Parkway across the arroyos
- Completion of Central Avenue
- Endorsement of upgrade of Cajalco Road to 6 lane expressway, extending to SR-241 in Orange County
- Strong support for alternative modes of transportation, including Metrolink and Bus Rapid Transit

General Brown asked Hamrick about a previously raised question regarding a potential beltway around the City, including the proposed Cajalco expressway. Hamrick stated that state law requires that a General Plan cannot depend upon improvements made in other communities. The General Plan can include policies supporting improvement outside the City, but that the City's plan must focus primarily on improvements within the City's jurisdiction. General Brown asked that the CAC's report and the General Plan include policies in support of such improvements outside the City. Tom Boyd stated that the Riverside City Council is already on record in support of the Cajalco expansion proposal and that the City's involvement in the CETAP and TUMF process is intended to facilitate the building of these and other regional roadways.

Hamrick stated that two key issues remained unresolved:

- How should Overlook Parkway be extended from its western terminus at Washington?
- Would Level of Service E (or lower) be acceptable on selected streets at selected times?

Hamrick's presentation showed two alternatives for the western terminus of Overlook Parkway:

Alternative A: two-lane connection to Madison Street at Victoria Avenue

Alternative B: two-lane connection with no access at Victoria Avenue (below grade crossing at Victoria), with one way "legs" at Washington and Madison

Each alternative assumes that Overlook Parkway would be extended over the arroyo; the alternatives simply investigated how best to move traffic from the western end of Overlook to the 91 Freeway.

(The precise alignments, as well as more detailed analysis, can be viewed in the presentation on the General Plan website.)

Hamrick stated that the analysis led to the following findings:

- Providing a new western connection at Overlook does not appear to draw traffic from outside the local area.
- Both of the reviewed alternatives primarily serve local traffic to and from the freeway.
- Neither alternative appears to add significant traffic to Victoria, although Alternative B added less

Regarding Alternative A, the analysis found that:

- The new link is expected to carry 16,000 vehicles/day
- Madison shifts volume from Mary and Washington
- The new link impacts the Madison/Victoria intersection (but assumes it remains unsignalized)
- The new link provides convenient access to SR-91, both eastbound and westbound
- The link would focus traffic on Madison, designated as an arterial road with greater capacity, more direct freeway access, and less adjacent residential land use than along Mary or Washington Streets

For Alternative B, the analysis found that:

- The new link would carry 14,000 vehicles/day
- The new link would improve conditions on Mary and Washington, but less so than Alternative A
- Alternative B shares the traffic load on Madison, Mary, and Washington, but still results in more traffic on Madison

For both Alternatives, the analysis found that:

- There is limited removal of traffic from Alessandro/Arlington, and the western connection does not draw significant amounts of regional cut-through traffic

Hamrick concluded his presentation with a series of consultant and staff recommendations:

- Support of a preferred circulation alternative with the following components:
 - Completion of the currently adopted General Plan Circulation Element
 - "Alternative A" for the western terminus of Overlook Parkway

- No recommendation on Central Avenue extension
- Policy statements in support of Cajalco Road's expansion to a 6 lane expressway to SR-241 in Orange County
- Policy statements in favor of expanded use of alternative modes of transportation
- Modifying LOS policy on regionally impacted routes – allowing LOS E or worse – at selected times of day
- Policy statements in favor of continued work on regional solutions to the City's transportation issues

CAC members and staff asked questions and offered clarifications related to the presentation.

Tom Boyd stated that as Cajalco Road is expanded and extended, there is a noticeable reduction in traffic off of City streets.

Members asked several particular questions about the Overlook connection alternatives.

Matt Webb asked why the consultants did not consider connecting Overlook directly across Washington to Madison. Janet Harvey of Meyer, Mohaddes Associates stated that people traveling north on Washington would have to take a left onto Madison; the alternatives offered easier transitions for traffic heading north.

Matt Webb and Tom Boyd noted that the City's General Plan used to show Overlook going straight across Washington and connecting to the southern end of Madison. Matt Webb stated that from a traffic standpoint, it might make more sense for Overlook to go straight across Washington.

Matt Webb also stated that drivers can cut through Hawarden Drive to access Mary Street. Hamrick stated he assumed that the City would take steps to avoid/deter traffic on Hawarden. Tom Boyd added that there have been many requests over the years to close Hawarden or cul-de-sac it. He added that staff doesn't have a lot of problems with that possibility.

Regarding the proposed Madison connection, Dave McNiel stated that the Casa Blanca neighborhood has just implemented traffic calming measures and that the increased use of Madison seems to be contrary to what that neighborhood has planned. He asked if Madison's street designation be changed (reduced) as part of the General Plan program. Matt Webb stated that this was a question he had as well. Fran Dunajski stated that the curb bulb outs and other improvements on Madison were meant to be temporary and that the City communicated this to the neighborhood. Tom Pevehouse stated that he would like to make sure that people in the Casa Blanca people are informed of this.

Matt Webb asked if Overlook was designated as a 2-lane road on the General Plan, because the model appeared to analyze the proposed arroyo bridge as 2 lanes. Hamrick stated that the traffic model assumed the bridge would be 2 lanes but that Overlook Parkway was designated as a facility with the potential for 4 lanes.

Kimberly Davidson-Morgan asked to confirm that no citywide traffic scenario maintains a LOS above E/F in all locations. Hamrick confirmed this was true; he said that modeling

might show improvement in LOS if many roads in the City were significantly expanded, including expansions of arterial streets to 8 or more lanes. However, because the likelihood of such major expansions was unlikely and probably widely undesirable in the community, they were not studied.

General Brown asked how surrounding streets and intersections would fare if a traffic signal were placed at Lincoln Avenue and Washington Street. Hamrick stated that this would likely improve conditions at nearby intersections.

Chair Leonard asked for consensus to hear from members of the public now before the CAC discussed the matter further and came to any decision.

Dan Hays stated that the CAC and City should ask how great a value we place on Victoria Avenue. He stated that in other cities with historically significant streets, tunnels and furrows were used to avoid important sites.

Bill Wilkman suggested that the consultants reconsider idea of a cul-de-sac on Washington Street. He stated that he would like to see a connection between Washington and Dufferin. He also stated that there should be a smoother transition from Overlook to the freeway than what is shown -- which could include taking Madison Street across the open field to Washington. He stated that there is still a need for a specific plan-level study of the corridor to deal with traffic calming and proposed roadway alignments. He stated that Victoria Avenue Forever would likely support Alternative B.

CAC members suggested that there be analysis of Overlook Parkway at 4 lanes (including the arroyo bridge) to see what would happen if road is built to its planned width as well as a review of connecting Overlook traffic to the freeway via Adams. Mike Fine asked if Overlook traffic could travel directly up Washington. Hamrick stated that Washington would need to be reclassified and that it was unlikely that an interchange could be developed at Washington and SR-91 due to the close proximity of other interchanges.

Bill Warkentin stated that as a matter of principle, the more alternatives people have to move from Overlook to the freeway, the better. He said that he would like the CAC to support an alternative with more intersections. He stated that many local impacts could be addressed with appropriate traffic calming measures and that restoring Madison to 4 lanes was probably the right solution.

Tom Boyd stated that the key question suggested by the Alternative is if traffic should be focused on Madison or should traffic be spread across several streets.

Morgan Keith asked if the City should accept traffic conditions at Level of Service E or F. He stated that more ought to be done to avoid such conditions.

Dave McNiel stated that there seemed to be consensus that Victoria Avenue is "sacred" but that it is also apparently somehow ok to ramrod traffic through other neighborhoods.

Kimberly Davidson-Morgan stated that she did not understand the purpose of the Central Avenue extension. Hamrick stated that the new segment would relieve the Arlington/Alessandro intersection but was ultimately a shift of traffic.

Chair Leonard suggested that the CAC consider several questions individually:

- Will we accept Level of Service E/F on Victoria Avenue?
- Will we accept Level of Service E/F on major arterials? At certain times?
- Should Washington/Dufferin be connected?
- Should there be a traffic light at Lincoln/Washington?
- Should the City undertake a specific plan-level study before determining how best to channel traffic from the west end of Overlook to the freeway?

After some discussion, Hamrick reminded the CAC that for the purposes of the General Plan, it was not necessary to get into specific street design and operational details. Following further discussion, Matt Webb asked if the CAC could support inclusion of a policy that Victoria Avenue must operate at Level of Service D or better. Chair Leonard reframed the question and asked for a vote on a policy to strive for Level of Service D or better along the Victoria and Lincoln corridors. All CAC members but one were in favor of supporting this policy.

Chair Leonard next asked if the CAC would support a policy of maximizing connections from the western end of Overlook to the freeway. This policy passed on a voice vote of the CAC.

Chair Leonard then asked if the CAC would support a specific-plan level study for the area prior to the construction of the Overlook arroyo bridge. Planning Director Gutierrez suggested that the study area could span the area between Adams and Mary, but also stated that Alternatives A and B were intended to protect the greenbelt from heavy traffic. On a vote to support a specific-plan level study between Adams and Mary, all CAC members voted affirmatively.

The CAC then discussed how to address Level of Service issues. Bill Warkentin stated that he was concerned that the CAC not redefine problem areas so that they are not technically problems anymore. Chair Leonard stated some flexibility seemed warranted in that it is important to provide incentives to get infill development in locations across the City.

Planning Director Gutierrez stated that he was interested to see the struggle with this issue and added that staff has struggled with it as well. He stated that even if the City decided to stop all building within the City, many City streets would still experience poor Levels of Service because of regional traffic. He said that there seemed to be no realistic opportunities to add roads in the City without destroying the greenbelt or Sycamore Canyon Park.

Tom Boyd added that the more the City widens its streets, the greater the likelihood that more drivers will be lured off of the freeways. He acknowledged that it is unappealing to accept lower Levels of Service, but there did not appear to be any realistic alternative to doing so.

Chair Leonard then asked if the CAC would recommend a policy to allow Level of Service E (but not F) on regionally affected routes during peak hours. A majority of CAC members voted to support such a policy.

Vice Chair Pevehouse asked about the width of the Overlook Parkway bridge. Planning Director Gutierrez stated that the CAC could recommend a General Plan policy that

Overlook remain a 110-foot roadway, but that the bridge over the arroyo be no more than a two lane roadway. A majority of CAC members then voted to support such a policy.

Land Use Recommendations

Cook stated that staff wished for the CAC to reconsider several land use recommendations the CAC had made at previous meetings. The CAC agreed to staff's alternative recommendations for Sites #2 (Magnolia/Pierce), #7 (La Sierra Metrolink), #8 (Arlington/Van Buren), #20 (Magnolia/Brockton/Central), and #23 (University/Chicago/Seventh). For Site #3, the CAC recommended Mixed-Use Village over staff's recommendation of General Commercial. After some discussion, staff agreed with the CAC's recommendation of MU-V for this site.

Comment [PC1]: Note to staff:
Since I was running the meeting, my notes are a little fuzzy on Area 8 – please let me know if my recollection agrees with yours.

Mike Fine noted that the southern portion of Area #7 should be designated Public Facilities to reflect the existing school on that site. Staff agreed to make this change.

Wrap-Up, Next Steps

Cook stated that staff and the consultant team were working diligently to deliver draft GP elements to CAC members well in advance of the May 17 review meeting.

Adjournment

Hearing no requests for further discussion, Chair Leonard declared the meeting adjourned at about 8:10 p.m.

Next and Final CAC Meeting: Monday, May 17, 2004, 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Note earlier start time. Sandwiches and soft drinks will be provided.